



## Chronic disease and disasters medication demands of Hurricane Katrina evacuees

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### Abstract:

**BACKGROUND:** Preparing for natural disasters has historically focused on treatment for acute injuries, environmental exposures, and infectious diseases. Many disaster survivors also have existing chronic illness, which may be worsened by post-disaster conditions. The relationship between actual medication demands and medical relief pharmaceutical supplies was assessed in a population of 18,000 evacuees relocated to San Antonio TX after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005. **METHODS:** Healthcare encounters from day 4 to day 31 after landfall were monitored using a syndromic surveillance system based on patient chief complaint. Medication-dispensing records were collected from federal disaster relief teams and local retail pharmacies serving evacuees. Medications dispensed to evacuees during this period were quantified into defined daily doses and classified as acute or chronic, based on their primary indications. **RESULTS:** Of 4,229 categorized healthcare encounters, 634 (15%) were for care of chronic medical conditions. Sixty-eight percent of all medications dispensed to evacuees were for treatment of chronic diseases. Cardiovascular medications (39%) were most commonly dispensed to evacuees. Thirty-eight percent of medication doses dispensed by federal relief teams were for chronic care, compared to 73% of doses dispensed by retail pharmacies. Federal disaster relief teams supplied 9% of all chronic care medicines dispensed. **CONCLUSIONS:** A substantial demand for drugs used to treat chronic medical conditions was identified among San Antonio evacuees, as was a reliance on retail pharmacy supplies to meet this demand. Medical relief pharmacy supplies did not consistently reflect the actual demands of evacuees.

**Source:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2007.04.030>

### Resource Description

#### Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker

# Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

## **Exposure :**

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

**Extreme Weather Event:** Hurricanes/Cyclones

## **Geographic Feature:**

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

## **Geographic Location:**

resource focuses on specific location

United States

## **Health Impact:**

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Other Health Impact

**Other Health Impact:** Access to medications for chronic health conditions

## **Medical Community Engagement:**

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

## **Mitigation/Adaptation:**

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

## **Population of Concern:** A focus of content

## **Population of Concern:**

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

**Other Vulnerable Population:** People with existing chronic illness

## **Resource Type:**

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

## **Timescale:**

time period studied

# Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Time Scale Unspecified

## **Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:**

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content